

In the claims:

1-43. Canceled.

1 44. (Previously presented) An isolated polypeptide comprising:

- (a) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 148; or
- (b) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 148, lacking its associated signal peptide;  
**wherein said polypeptide induces chondrocyte proliferation.**

2 45. (Previously presented) The isolated polypeptide of claim 44 comprising the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 148.

3 46. (Previously presented) The isolated polypeptide of claim 44 comprising the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 148, lacking its associated signal peptide.

47-49. Canceled.

4 50. (Previously presented) A chimeric polypeptide comprising a polypeptide according to Claim 44 fused to a heterologous polypeptide.

5 51. (Previously presented) The chimeric polypeptide of Claim 50, wherein said heterologous polypeptide is an epitope tag or an Fc region of an immunoglobulin.